621 We shall comment later (1) on the complex motives that might have induced

1. Cf. p. 77.

[197] these two bands, speaking different dialects and who were not even capable of understanding one another without an interpreter, to practically merge. It seems that group b1 was composed of the rare survivors of a formerly important formation now disappeared, living previously in two distinct groups, around the sources of the eastern tributaries of the Roosevelt River. We have already tried to calculate these losses, resulting from recent epidemics (2). Group c had,

2. Cf. above, p. 6.

without doubt, gone through the same hardships. Moreover, its [578] position had been compromised by antagonisms with other bands rising from the same dialect, and who had formerly been their allies. A visit, with a commercial goal, of related Indians originally from the south (members of the group known by the name of Kabisi) must have raised the forces of group b1 to 31 persons for 621 several days. Here is its composition at this moment:

115 157 622 601 Fire 1 (1 to 7). --The family of the chief of the band. The chief, B1, is 30 to 35 years old, and one of the most intelligent Indians whom it was our privilege to encounter. But he is intelligent in a way very different from A1. The latter is prudent and very resourceful, always meditating some political combination. On the contrary, B1 is not a man of action, but rather contemplative, with a charming and poetic spirit, and rich sensibilities. He is fully conscious of the inevitable decadence of his people, and this conviction often shades his words with a subtle tint of melancholy:

(4) ĵoãmditnʔẽ ñjãñaĵne heni niho ãmdedñjẽn. (b1)

"I also did the same thing, now it is finished," [51] he says, remembering happier days when his group, far from being reduced to a handful of individuals incapable of keeping alive their traditional customs, was comprised of several hundreds of participants faithful to all the manifestations of the Nambikwara culture. His curiosity toward our customs and towards those which we had been able to observe in other tribes is just as great as ours. With him, ethnographic work is never unilateral. He conceives of it only as an exchange of information, and what we bring him is always very welcome. Often [17] he even asks us for—and preserves carefully—drawings representing

He was completely naked, that is, divested of his
756 necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and belt, and by the light of our
[301] electric lamps we could make out his tragic expression and his pale complexion. He let himself be helped to the camp without difficulty, where he sat down without a word and in a completely impressive attitude of dejection. Little by little, his story was drawn from him by an anxious listener. He explained that he had been carried off by the thunder (amõ), [a storm had broken the same day]; the thunder had carried him in the air to a point which he designated at a distance of 25 kilometers from the camp (Ananáz River), had divested him of all his ornaments, then brought him back the same way and left him in the place where we had discovered him exhausted. Everyone went to sleep commenting on the incident and the next morning, C20 had recovered not only his habitual good humor, but also all his ornaments, which amazed no one and for which he offered no explanation. But the following days a very different version of the event began to be peddled by the Tarundé. They said that, far from having entered into relationship with the other world, C20, under the cover of a magical disappearance, had gone to undertake
● [578] some transactions with a band of Sabané Indians who were camping in the vicinity. These insinuations were never developed further, and the official version of the affair continued to be ostensibly admitted. However, in our personal relationships, B1 let his preoccupations be seen upon several occasions. As the two groups left us shortly after, we never found out the outcome of the story.

756 No information has been uncovered concerning the manner of
278 naming the shaman as such. In the preparation of the arrow poison, C20 was assisted by his potential son-in-law C25.

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622 [104] Besides his supernatural attributes, the chief, or shaman,
756 plays another role, that of "leader" in ceremonies and celebrations.
796 The Nambikwara have three types of ceremonies. Those which mark the critical moments of each one's existence, such as birth, initiation, puberty, marriage, death; the seasonal festivals; and finally, the ceremonies celebrated on exceptional occasions: war and hunting or scavenging expeditions. We have already alluded to the rites of war, and we shall speak farther on of the ceremonies of the first type. We shall limit ourselves here then to some brief observations concerning the others.

had been poisoned. An attack of reprisal was carefully prepared and took place, in the course of which A1 and A5 distinguished themselves. The six persons composing the mission were killed by beating or pierced with arrows, including a baby of two. Only one woman was found alive by an expedition sent to aid them from Cuiabá. The version which she gave of the events coincides exactly with that which we collected from the main protagonists of the other camp. 177 648 797 [726]

Poison was still to play a role in the life of A6, and this during our stay. We found ourselves visiting (August 1938) at the camp of a neighboring group (a2), and relationships became quickly strained between A6 and our hosts, undoubtedly over the question of women, so that he got the habit of coming to my camp to seek a more friendly atmosphere, at the same time that he shared my food. This fact was noticed, a delegation of four men came to find me one day, and in quite a menacing tone of voice told me to mix some poison (which they brought me along) in the next dish which I would offer to A6; they thought it advisable and indispensable to do away with him at once, for, they told me, he is "very wicked" (kakore) and "is worth nothing" (aidotiene). I had the greatest difficulty in getting rid of my visitors without opposing them with a refusal which in turn would have exposed me to animosity which I had just learned it was better to avoid, and I considered my best plan of action to exaggerate my ignorance of the language, and to feign obstinate lack of comprehension. After several attempts, my visitors retired very disappointed. I warned A6 who immediately disappeared. I was to see him again only four months later. 278 578

These incidents are characteristic of Nambikwara psychology. The Nambikwara are very open, confident and spontaneous, but they are very sensitive and react with great violence to deception [125] or disappointment. Few primitives are as easily accessible. Few give as free access to their intimate lives, to their beliefs, daily acts, thoughts and sentiments. But despite this facility and cordiality, the visitor, be he an ethnographer or a member of a neighboring tribe—must constantly be on guard and watch his actions; for the slightest imprudence, the least clumsiness, may incite reactions difficult to evaluate among his hosts, and in connection with which recent events are always present to recall that they may be extreme. A6 offered a perfect example of this confidence and spontaneity, allied with brusk manifestations of violence and irritability. 157 648

Thus, the Nambikwara character alternately presents two aspects, or more exactly, testifies to a double nature: one which we shall call positive, and which goes much farther in this sense than among many Indians in contact for centuries with the whites; and the other, of metaphysical nature, whose rigor and exaltation at times evoke the mysticism of the North 157

101 The position of all groups known to be scattered through the Serra do Norte and Juruena Valley is recorded on the ethnographic map of the region which goes with these notes.[1]

[218] The exact meaning of the names cited above cannot yet be given with certainty. In the light of existing data, however, their study leads to the following conclusions which cannot be far from the truth.

Cocozu: "Uncles"; thus called by the others, perhaps, because they are the most primitive members of the whole tribe.

[578] Anunzu: This is clearly a corruption of the term anungzú or anungçú, which means "woman's milk"—a disparaging epithet like so many others found throughout the Americas; it may mean "infants" (unweaned babies).

Uaintaçu: Apparently a corruption of nuntaçú, which means "alligator" [Port. jacaré] in the language of the Juina Nambicuara. The Uaintaçu group would thus be none other than the old Jacare tribe mentioned in the first chapter of this work.

Tagnani: They are obviously the Tamarari of the old geographic maps; they should be equated with the Tamarare or Camarare, who gave the river its name and who are mentioned in several ancient documents.

Tawite: This word signifies "child" or "son" [offspring], a common appellation among other tribes as well.

In order to avoid future confusion, I propose to retain the name "Nambicuara" in conjunction with the specific name peculiar to each group.

361 The villages of the Serra do Norte Indians are usually built on the crest of small hills, far from the watercourses. Some are more than one kilometer distant from the nearest river or stream.

It may be assumed that the choice of such sites has a twofold aim: the Indians suffer less from mosquitoes and they dominate the surrounding territory, which is an advantage to people leading as they did up to now a life of constant warfare.

The village is built on a large plaza, fifty meters in diameter; once cleaned of bush, which is rooted up [219] by hand, the ground [535] is kept clear by the constant tread of feet. One night of dancing, with its endless beat along the same path, suffices to smooth out the village square.

1 [See map following foreign text, cat. 116 - Analyst]

854 Children are treated with great affection and refused nothing. They are rarely punished. Many an Indian, already elderly would walk for leagues [256] with a child on his back to come to us and give the little one some of the presents we were distributing.

622 They have no clearly defined chiefs. Some men the muleteers call chiefs are merely individuals of some influence frequently heeded by the others.

578 622 One day, in Campos Novos, we were visited by the Cocozu and Anunze. Several young men of both groups spent the night there: Nuleke, Krikricéknerá (Manduca), Paixão, Preguiça [Port. "sloth], Damasceno, and the famous Cavagnac, supposed chief of the Urutau village, a scoundrel who used to ambush the muleteers on the Line and take their packs.

On the following day many Uaintaçu came; they were bold, rough, and quite unpleasant people.

The others, when they saw the Uiantaçu approaching, gave signs of agitation. Finally the Uaintaçu arrived, very much excited by the presence of our guests. An endless discussion ensued among the three groups. They all talked and gesticulated in angry fashion, with gleaming eyes, ready to attack each other. Fearing a conflict which would be disastrous on every count, we intervened by distributing cigarettes, matches, axes, etc., in order to distract them. They calmed down. But some of the Cocozu and Uaintaçu boys continued to argue and were gradually surrounded by the others who listened attentively. Two on one side would speak; two from the other side would reply. The two Indians who talked, Damasceno and Cavagnac, were more intelligent, clever and bold. There was nothing to indicate that they were true chiefs, recognized as such on every occasion. They were temporary chiefs.

622 Among the Tagnani and Tawite, on the other hand, there are clearly defined secular chiefs. One of them stood out because he wore no ornaments whatever [257]. He actually commanded and was obeyed by all. He had three wives.

562 The status of the Nambicuara woman is not so degraded as that of other Brazilian Indian women. She works hard, it is true. She [462] gathers fruit, grates manioc, handles the mortar and pestle, erects the hunting shelters, spins cotton, carries the family belongings, cares for the children, takes part in cultivating the plot; but usually she is